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StandWithUs Center for Legal Justice Files Title VI Complaint Against Middlebury College Detailing Pervasive Antisemitism

A federal Title VI complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights unveiled on February 16 details of how Jewish students at Middlebury College, who reported to the administration concerns about a pervasively hostile campus climate for Jews since October 7, 2023, were met with unlawful and disparate treatment by the administration; retaliatory disciplinary proceedings; administrative denial that antisemitism exists; hostility; instructions to Jewish students to downplay and hide symbols associated with their Jewish identity; and outright failure by the administration to enforce their own policies to protect Jews.



LEGAL ACTION AGAINST
ANTISEMITISM

February 15, 2024

Via Email: OCR@ed.gov; OCR.Boston@ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Bldg
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100

Office for Civil Rights
Boston Office, U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921

I. INTRODUCTION

The StandWithUs Center for Legal Justice ("SCLJ"), a non-profit membership organization with the mission of supporting Israel and fighting antisemitism through legal action, respectfully submits this letter of complaint pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq. ("Title VI"). This complaint alleges unlawful discrimination and harassment experienced by current and former Middlebury College ("Middlebury" or the "College") students¹ as a result of their actual and perceived Jewish ethnicity and identity, as well as a series of incidents that have created a pervasively hostile antisemitic campus climate at Middlebury.

As discussed more fully below, despite ample notice,² Middlebury's administration has failed to remediate these issues and, to the contrary, has contributed to this climate through its inaction, refusal to enforce its own policies, dismissiveness toward Jewish students' concerns, and lack of equal treatment of its Jewish students as compared with other minority groups on campus.

As a result, Middlebury has deprived Jewish students of the ability to participate fully and equally in the educational opportunities available to other Middlebury students³ at least one

student has elected to graduate early to escape this pervasively hostile environment; another is considering transferring at the end of term; and we are aware of at least one student who already transferred because of the hostile climate on campus toward Jews. We have also been informed

¹ SCLJ is in direct contact with students whose experiences of antisemitism are detailed herein and can facilitate interviews between the students and the Office for Civil Rights.

² In addition to notice given by students themselves, we note two letters previously sent by StandWithUs to Middlebury College President Laurie Patton, dated [May 16, 2021](#) and [October 19, 2023](#), detailing many of these same issues and calling for remedial action by the university. The university never responded to either letter.

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